

# 15 Third conditional (If he had been...); I wish I had been...

## 1 Look at this sentence:

If Charlie Chaplin **had died** in 1989, he **would have been** 100 years old.

Chaplin did not in fact die in 1989. He died before he was 100 years old. The sentence imagines something that did not happen in the past. This structure is called the Third Conditional:

If + PAST PERFECT + { **would have**  
(or 'd have)

If he **had tried** harder, he **would have won**.

Here is another example:

If Jane **had come** on her usual train, I **would have seen** her. (She **didn't come** on her usual train, so I **didn't see** her.)

Notice how we can also use the negative forms **wouldn't have** and **hadn't**:

John F. Kennedy **wouldn't have died** in 1963 if he **hadn't gone** to Dallas. (Kennedy **died** in 1963 because he **went** to Dallas, but this sentence imagines the opposite).

I **would have phoned** you if I **hadn't lost** your phone number. (I **didn't phone** you because I **lost** your phone number.)

I **wouldn't have gone** to the museum if I **had known** it was shut. (I **went** to the museum

because I **didn't know** it was shut.)

## 2 We can use **wish + had done** to talk about the past when we are sorry that something didn't happen, and we imagine that it did:



He **wishes he had studied** hard at school. (He **didn't study** hard, and now he's sorry about it.)

I **woke up very late** this morning. I **wish I had gone** to bed earlier last night.

We can use a negative form (**wish...hadn't done**) to say that we are sorry that something did happen:

Many people **wish** that John F. Kennedy **hadn't gone** to Dallas. (Many people are sorry that John F. Kennedy **went** to Dallas.)

## Practice

### A Read this story about Ellen.

In May 1992 Ellen lost her job in London. She didn't have much money in the bank, so she was very worried. She looked in the newspapers and she saw an advertisement for a job as a translator from German into English. She didn't speak German very well, so she didn't apply for it. In June, she heard about some teaching jobs abroad because a friend phoned to tell her about them. She phoned the company, and they asked her to go for an interview with the director. Ellen thought the interview went badly, but in fact the director was happy with the interview and offered Ellen a job in Spain. However, Ellen couldn't start at once because she didn't know any Spanish. She took a course to learn the language. She was good at languages and she made rapid progress. So, by September she had a new job, and she still had a little money left in the bank.

Now write sentences using the words in brackets.

0 (If Ellen/have/a lot of money in the bank, she/not/be/ so worried)

If Ellen had had a lot of money in the bank, she wouldn't have been so worried.

0 (If she/not/look/in the newspapers, she/not/see/the advertisement)

If she hadn't looked in the newspapers, she wouldn't have seen the advertisement.

- 1 (If she/speak/German very well, she/apply/for the job)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 (If her friend/not/phone, she /not/hear/about the teaching jobs )  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 (If she/not/contact/the company, they/not/ask/her to go for an interview)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 (If the interview/go/badly, the director/not/offer/Ellen a job)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 (If Ellen/know/some Spanish, she/start/at once)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 (If she/not/be/good at languages, she/not/make/rapid progress )  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B Use the information in brackets ( ) to complete these sentences.**

- 0 (Sam didn't get the job as a translator because he failed the exam.)  
Sam would have got the job as a translator if he had not failed the exam.
- 1 (Alan lost our phone number, so he didn't phone us.)  
If Alan \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ our phone number, he \_\_\_\_\_ us.
- 2 (Sally broke her leg, so she didn't go on holiday.)  
If Sally \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ her leg, she \_\_\_\_\_ on holiday.
- 3 (We didn't make a cake because we forgot to buy any eggs.)  
We \_\_\_\_\_ a cake if we \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ to buy some eggs.

**C Write sentences about these people who are sorry about things they did in the past. Use *wish* or *wishes*.**

- 0 Ian wasted his time at school; now he's sorry.  
Ian wishes he hadn't wasted his time at school.
- 1 I didn't tell the truth; now I'm sorry.  
I wish \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 John borrowed some money from his mother; now he's sorry.  
John \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Mary didn't get up early; now she's sorry.  
Mary \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Peter didn't go to the party; now he's sorry.  
Peter \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 I didn't send Jill a birthday card; now I'm sorry.  
I \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Fiona didn't help her sister; now she's sorry.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 He shouted at the children; now he's sorry.  
\_\_\_\_\_